

NOT VOTING—5

Booker Klobuchar Warren
Harris Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pat Roberts, James M. Inhofe, Chuck Grassley, Richard C. Shelby, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, James Lankford, Mike Braun, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, John Thune.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 361 Ex.]

YEAS—65

Alexander	Graham	Perdue
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Isakson	Rubio
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Cassidy	Jones	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Coons	King	Shaheen
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sinema
Cramer	Manchin	Sullivan
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	McSally	Tillis
Daines	Menendez	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Warner
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Murphy	Young
Gardner	Paul	

NAYS—30

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Cantwell
Bennet	Brown	Cardin

Casey	Kaine	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Smith
Duckworth	Markey	Stabenow
Durbin	Merkley	Tester
Feinstein	Murray	Udall
Gillibrand	Peters	Van Hollen
Heinrich	Reed	Whitehouse
Hirono	Schatz	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker Klobuchar Warren
Harris Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, with respect to the Lagoa nomination, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, I can tell the Senate this morning that there is no higher priority for Senate Finance Democrats than the well-being of healthcare patients in this country and how strongly we feel about their having a right to good quality, affordable healthcare coverage.

Right now, too many of those folks are getting ripped off by an insurance lobbyist's dream—taxpayer-funded junk insurance—or by Big Pharma, which is always, always looking to engage in price gouging for one reason: They can get away with it. Take insulin. Insulin prices are up thirteenfold in recent years. The drug is not 13 times better. It is the same insulin that has been around for decades. But the reason the pharmaceutical companies do it is because they can get away with it.

This morning, I am going to take a few minutes and talk about what this really means for patients because I can tell you, this fall, there are a lot of families across this country who would rather be prepping for holidays than worrying about their healthcare. Unfortunately, the Trump administration is refusing to provide that kind of security for our patients.

To begin, let me tell you about a youngster in Oregon named Jasper. Jasper is 3, full of energy and love, and a big fan of playtime with cars and trucks and trains. He was born, however, with huge medical challenges—cystic fibrosis, cardiac and pancreatic problems, hearing loss. He needs a variety of treatments multiple times a day. It is so hard on Jasper's family. It is so

hard on Jasper. And, of course, the costs of Jasper's care are in the stratosphere. The family is fortunate to have health insurance through a parent's employer. They know how absolutely vital it is to have what they consider to be a lifeline—the protection of the Affordable Care Act.

At the heart of the Affordable Care Act are bedrock, ironclad protections for people like them—no discrimination by insurance companies against preexisting conditions. That was something we used to have some support for from the other side of the aisle. I know about that because I wrote a bipartisan bill that had airtight, loophole-free protection against what essentially was discrimination against those with preexisting conditions, and we got it into the Affordable Care Act.

Yet now we see the other side of the aisle trying to unravel those protections. They are trying to unravel the protection that we see for patients with respect to big expenses. Our approach has no annual or lifetime limits on coverage, no coverage denials that dragged people into bureaucratic nightmares, has young people covered on their parents' plan until age 26, and lots more. Those protections saved people's lives and made healthcare affordable for millions of Americans.

Unfortunately, with the support of my colleagues here on the other side in the Senate, the Trump administration wants to eliminate those protections that are so important to Jasper and families like his. My colleagues on the other side are standing by and basically doing nothing while the administration and Republican-led States are out there maneuvering in the courts to get the entire Affordable Care Act wiped out.

The so-called Texas case, which is an absurd lawsuit based on an absurd argument—an argument that wouldn't pass the smell test in a middle class school mock trial—somehow rightwing, ideological judges have kept it alive. Because this lawsuit keeps hanging around, tens of millions of Americans might lose their healthcare with hardly any warning and no fallback options to protect them.

Now Republicans have claimed they have fix-it bills they could pass in the event their allies took down the Affordable Care Act. They do read like they were written by the lawyers and the lobbyists on the payroll of the big insurance companies. If insurance companies can hike up the cost of treating a preexisting condition so high that it becomes unaffordable, it is no different from being denied coverage at the outset.

While the Texas case moves forward, the Trump administration is continuing to allow junk insurance scam artists to defraud Americans into buying worthless plans that aren't worth really the paper they are written on and certainly don't cover the healthcare Americans need.

I want to be very specific about it. This is an insurance lobbyist's dream.

You have tax breaks for junk insurance. That is on every insurance lobbyist's wish list for the holidays. I think it is federally funded fraud, plain and simple, but unfortunately it has the support of a lot of Republicans here in the Congress.

It is now the middle of the open enrollment period for health insurance on [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). The Trump administration's support for junk plans has created a whole new burden for families across the country who are shopping for insurance.

I am particularly troubled by this because I remember what junk insurance used to be like. I was director of the senior citizens at home for almost 7 years before I was elected to the Congress, and those were the days when you could go around the country, whether it was Montana or Oregon or anywhere else, and fast-talking salesmen would sell 10, 15, sometimes 20 policies to supplement a senior's Medicare. They were called Medigap policies, and they were useless. Seniors should have saved that money to pay the rent and maybe make sure they had heat in their houses.

Finally, we got rid of those Medigap rip-off policies. When I came to the Congress, it was my top priority. We got it passed. It was a bipartisan proposal. But now junk plans are back. They are different from those Medigap rip-offs, but, much like what I battled when I was the head of the senior citizens in Oregon, they are still built around the same proposition. They are essentially worthless. They are an insurance lobbyist's dream. In the case of what we are dealing with—the administration gutting the Affordable Care Act—I think it is essentially Federal tax breaks for junk insurance, and that is why I think it is tantamount to federally funded fraud.

The Trump administration's support for junk plans has created a whole new burden for families across the country who are trying to shop for insurance that gives them real value. Those shoppers used to be able to trust that junk plans had actually been banned from the marketplace. Now those shoppers have to wade through Byzantine and manipulative marketing scams and incomprehensible insurance lingo to try to figure out if they are getting coverage that actually helps them or, as I have described too often, just worthless junk.

What is worse, the Trump administration actually redirects people looking for coverage from the [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) website to third-party brokers who can sell unsuspecting customers junk plans. I think it is astounding that the Trump administration has seen fit to heap another burden on vulnerable people. After we have called this administration out on it, they are not willing to do anything to correct it.

But unfortunately, since the beginning of the Trump administration—with the help of too many allies in the

Congress—it has been one attempt after another to take healthcare away from vulnerable Americans, from millions of vulnerable Americans, those like 3-year-old little Jasper and his family, that I started talking about at home in Oregon.

On a fundamental level, this is a debate about whether this country is going to go back to the days when healthcare was only for the healthy and wealthy. That was the way it worked, if the insurance companies could clobber somebody with a pre-existing condition. If you are healthy, it didn't matter. You did not have to worry. If you were wealthy, you just sat down and wrote out a check. That is the way it worked.

But when I came to the Senate, we put together a bipartisan bill, airtight, loophole-free protection for those with preexisting conditions. There are colleagues on the other side of the aisle who cosponsored my bill—and by the way, the President of the Senate knows who was the leader of that effort, one of his predecessors in the Utah delegation, the late Senator Bennet.

So this idea that we are just going to sit around and go back to the days when healthcare was for the healthy and wealthy, that is not acceptable to Finance Democrats that I have the honor to work with. It is not acceptable to any of us on this side, and it should not be acceptable to my colleagues in the Congress.

That is where Donald Trump wants to return to, the days when healthcare was for the healthy and wealthy. They have made it clear by working to eliminate preexisting condition protections in the Congress and the courts, by giving insurance lobbyists Federal tax breaks for junk insurance plans, and by seeking to slash health programs for the vulnerable.

I just want to make it clear that, on this side of the aisle, we are about patients. We are about protecting patients. We are about the proposition that in a country as strong and good and rich as ours—where we are going to spend \$3.5 trillion this year on healthcare, if you divide the number of Americans, like maybe 325 million into \$3.5 trillion, you could send every family of four in America a check for \$40,000. We are spending enough to take care of patients.

We ought to be doing more to protect, rather than turning back the clock on young people like Jasper and his family. I just wanted to make it clear, we will be on the floor talking about more patients in the days ahead and on the fight, a fight we are going to prosecute relentlessly, to protect those patients under the Affordable Care Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I was walking by and heard Senator WYDEN—I do not usually sit over here—Senator WYDEN was speaking about healthcare. It is just so clear to me some of the

things that this body could be doing to bring down the cost of healthcare and to expand the number of people that have health insurance. I know, in my State, I worked with, I know, a friend of the Presiding Officer, Governor Kasich, a Republican—I am a Democrat—on expanding Medicaid in Ohio. In fact, after the Affordable Care Act, we now have 900,000 more people that have insurance.

But what I liked about what Senator WYDEN was saying was some of the things we could do in the future. It is clear to me, if we allowed the government to negotiate drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries, directly with the drug companies the way we do at the Veterans Administration, it could make a huge difference in drug costs.

We, in this body, a large part is because the drug company lobby refuses to do it.

Mr. WYDEN. If my colleague would yield?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

MR. WYDEN. My colleague has been an enormous champion for consumers, and I just want to ask my colleague, didn't he and finance Democrats try in the Finance Committee to get rid of the restrictions on negotiating to do exactly what he is saying?

Mr. BROWN. Yes, that is exactly right. It should be an easy process. We know how to do it at the Veterans Administration. The cost is 40 or 50 percent of what typically is the cost a patient pays.

The other thing we could do—and we were this close to getting it in the Affordable Care Act, is giving people the option, at age 50 or 55, to buy into Medicare because, as Senator WYDEN knows, we all have in our States—whether it is Utah or Oregon or Ohio, we have 58-year-olds that lose their jobs or 62-year-olds that lose their jobs, and they cannot really often find insurance, or it is not affordable if they can. If they had the option to buy in—rather in a neutral way we built it into the Affordable Care Act, but lost in the end. We fell one vote short. But it would have made a huge difference in people being able to get through that.

I will never forget, I had a townhall in Youngstown some years ago. A woman stood up and said, "I'm 62 years old. I hold two jobs. I never had health insurance. I just want to stay alive until I'm 65." She did not say I want to stay alive to raise my grandkids or to take a trip. It was to stay alive so I can get on Medicare and get insurance, and that just should not be in this country.

Mr. WYDEN. My understanding—and, again, I have listened to my colleague on the Finance Committee. He is a champion on not going back, but going forward with more Medicare-type choices. Like making that person who is really wondering if they are going to make it until 65 in order to get to Medicare, he would like—for example, say an older woman who has been a victim of age discrimination, did not have much money, he would like to

make them eligible for Medicare at 60 or 61 or something like that.

Mr. BROWN. Absolutely—I thank Senator WYDEN—absolutely. Just give them that option. It is something we ought to be able to do. We can do it in a cost-effective way. In the end, it means fewer trips to the emergency room. In the end, it means a healthy population of people at those 10 years when they are more likely to get sick and more likely to need Medicare, but are not likely to be eligible.

I thank Senator WYDEN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

REMEMBERING NATHAN LANE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Foreign Service Officer of the United States and a former Pearson Fellow in my office, who was tragically killed in an accident while serving his country abroad.

After serving in my office for a year-long fellowship, Nathan Lane was assigned to the Poland desk at the U.S. State Department here in Washington. Sadly, while on temporary duty in Poland, he was involved in a car accident. While he was initially hospitalized, his injuries proved too severe, and, surrounded by his loving family, he passed away on November 2.

Nathan was a committed public servant who joined the State Department in 2000 and served in nearly every corner of the globe. He and his wife Sara and, later, his son Peter travelled from Mexico, to Russia, to Belarus, to Vietnam, and finally to Kenya. After his assignment in Kenya, he had the “misfortune” to be assigned to my office through a Pearson Fellowship. Here, my team and I got to see his diligence and dedication every day firsthand.

During his time in my office, Nathan proved invaluable. His knowledge and expertise of foreign policy gave him a mastery of the portfolio, as revealed by his exceptionally researched policy papers on important international issues and matters that my team and I tackled in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Nathan’s understanding of the dynamics of foreign relations and his skills at compiling pertinent information allowed him to craft the soon-to-be-released report on China. This product of the Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and Cybersecurity Policy will be a comprehensive report on the activities of China in the Indo-Pacific region. Absent Nathan’s diligence and dedication, this report would not have been possible.

Additionally, Nathan drafted a resolution urging the formation of an unprecedented treaty alliance between the United States and Indo-Pacific nations to collectively guard against growing cyber threats. The Cyber League of Indo-Pacific States, or CLIPS, was Nathan’s brainchild. He was passionate about this idea and rightfully proud of this resolution, and my team and I are honored to carry on this torch.

Of course, Nathan contributed so much more than just policy expertise. His kind heart and curious nature made him a friend to my staff and me. He would readily help those around him, even with the smallest tasks, without a whisper of complaint and quickly fit in as one of the team.

Nathan had many passions beyond foreign policy. He loved chess, and every so often, we would catch him pulling up an ongoing game between times of busyness. He loved running, and it wasn’t uncommon for him to step away from his desk at a convenient time to go for a quick jog around Capitol Hill.

Perhaps his greatest passion, though, was baseball. Indeed, one of his most timeless contributions to our office was his membership of Coors & Corn, the joint softball team between Senator SASSE’s office and mine. We may not have won it all that year, but we certainly would not have stood a chance without Nathan. As we celebrate the World Series in Washington, Nathan was such a great Nats fan that, every time we cheer for that team, we will also be cheering for him.

He was one of a kind. He was cheerful, eager, and caring; his loss will be felt by all of us who knew him. I ask my colleagues to join me in praying for his family, his wife, and his son and commemorating the man who graced so many of us with his compassion.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2843

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019. This bill passed the House by a vote of 263 to 158, with 33 Republicans supporting it.

A week ago, along with every other Senate Democrat, I introduced the bill in the Senate. People on the frontlines helping these victims wrote this bill. This bill is not a Democratic bill. It is not a Republican bill. This bill is a survivors’ bill. It is written with the help of survivors who know what is needed in the real world.

The bill accomplishes two things. It preserves the advancements we made during the last reauthorization in 2013, and it includes certain meaningful improvements to the law. In particular, there are three key elements.

One, it expands jurisdiction over non-Native Americans for domestic violence offenses and crimes against children, elders, and law enforcement. Violence is a big problem on Tribal lands, and the best way to address it is to allow the Tribes themselves to pros-

ecute these crimes. Unfortunately, some, instead, want to circumvent the Tribal justice system that we know works, and this moves us in the wrong direction.

Secondly, the bill builds on existing antidiscrimination protections for the LGBT community. In the 2013 reauthorization, Congress declared that Federal grant recipients could use funds to train staff to recognize and combat discrimination against LGBT individuals. Unfortunately, the law wasn’t clear, and organizations are still uncertain if they can use funds for this purpose. This bill simply clarifies that intent. It is a small but very important change to help this at-risk community. There has been surprising resistance from some on the Republican side to include this modest language.

Third, our bill keeps guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. It does this by adding intimate partners and stalkers to the existing list of individuals who can be banned from possessing firearms. We know the presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the odds of a woman being killed by 500 percent. That is a major increase in risk. It only makes sense to take guns away from convicted domestic abusers who may use them to kill their spouses or partners.

There is simply no way to stop domestic violence, but I think we have a duty to do all we can, and this bill makes significant improvements in the law.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, no later than before the end of this year, the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2843 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the only amendments in order be two germane amendments per side; that the debate on the bill be limited to 1 hour and amendments limited to 30 minutes each, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote in relation to the amendments; that upon the disposition of the amendments, the bill, as amended, if amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage; and finally, that amendments and passage be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold, all with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I am reserving the right to object.

I am on the floor today to speak my piece about the Violence Against Women Act. I speak to this body not just as a Senator, but I speak to this body as a survivor of rape and as a survivor of domestic violence.

For months—for months—the senior Senator from California and I worked together on a piece of legislation that would reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, a bipartisan effort, an effort that brought the Senator and I together to reauthorize the bill with as much support in this body as possible.

We were working together in good faith to make our way through the issues that affect so many women in abusive situations, partners in abusive situations, domestic violence situations where children are involved, to find a common path forward to have this bill reauthorized, again, with as much support as possible in this body at a time when America views us as so politically divided.

What could bring us together? The issue of violence directed at women and children and survivors of sexual assault should bring us together.

Months of bipartisan effort—but there was pressure to immediately introduce the House-passed version of the Violence Against Women Act. We were moving ahead with steady progress in a number of these areas, but, again, there was political pressure to introduce the House-passed version of the bill, not one that we could come together with on the floor of this Senate but one that even the Democrats—in their release, in their press gaggle addressing the House version of Violence Against Women—said would never make it through the Senate. Why on Earth would we introduce a piece of legislation that will not make it through this body? Shouldn't we be working together to find a path forward?

We should continue to work on it. I sincerely hope that by the end of this year we can come together as Republicans and Democrats and not present a Republican version or a Democratic version but produce a version that will pass this body and protect those who are in a very vulnerable state. I have been in that vulnerable state before, and I appreciated the assistance that was given to me by folks who were funded by this piece of legislation.

So, with that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Objection is heard.

The Senator from California has the floor.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I would ask the Senator to yield for just a moment. I know we had some good discussions, and they broke off. I am very happy to continue to work on this. I felt it was important to enter the House bill because of the three very important provisions that I just went over, which are, in essence, the three improvements on the bill, if you will.

I have no problem sitting down now so that we can discuss it. If we could find a way that we can agree, I think that would be just fine. But in the interest of time and because there has been a substantial period of time, I just decided to introduce it. The three issues are Tribal sovereignty, the

LGBTQ people, and the gun provisions. Those are the three new House provisions.

I hope that Senator ERNST and I can sit down and discuss it. I would be very happy to do this—sit down and discuss, if she would like.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I truly appreciate the remarks by the senior Senator from California. I truly have enjoyed working on this piece of legislation.

There were three markers that were laid down within the House version of the bill as outlined previously, but there was no consensus there. It was, "Either accept these provisions or we don't work together."

We need to keep finding a way to get to consensus on a bill moving through this body, and I am happy to continue working on legislation with the Senator. I think, by the end of this year, we should find something that would work to reauthorize this very important piece of legislation, and I appreciate her leadership on this very much. I truly have enjoyed working with her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. If I may, in response to the Senator—I am very happy to accept the invitation. We can sit down and continue to work on this, but I would point out that these three provisions have tremendous support: the Tribal sovereignty, the protections for the LGBT community, and spouse protections when a spouse has a weapon. Those are rather difficult over here. They were not in the House. But who knows? Maybe we can work something out, and I am happy to try.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, the Violence Against Women Act turned 25 years old this year. As many of us are aware, this law provides desperately needed resources to tackle domestic and sexual abuse in our communities. Folks, it needs to be reauthorized.

I wasn't in the Senate the last time this bill was passed back in 2013, and I wanted to be part of the process of getting the bill done this time around. As a woman, as a survivor, and as someone who volunteered at a women's shelter in college, I understand just how awful violence against women can be in terms of physical and mental well-being, self-image, our families, and security in the whole of society.

For months the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and I worked to develop a bipartisan proposal that I really thought could get across the finish line. Folks, as that old "Schoolhouse Rock" video says: Without passing the House, the Senate, and getting a signature from the President, all you have is a bill, just a bill, not a law. And no survivors are helped by a bill.

Here we are today, after months of work and mountains of effort that

went toward working on a bipartisan bill, and at some point someone pressed the big red button of partisan politics, and the Democrats refused to work together any longer, walking away from the real progress we had made. Not only did they walk away from the negotiating table, but they did so by dropping a bill that is going nowhere, as they have acknowledged.

The Senate Democrats' bill is a non-starter. It will not pass the Senate. It will not get the President's signature. Most importantly, it will not actually help the survivors who need it.

These politics are sad. We should be helping survivors, not engaging in the kinds of partisan antics that will never produce real results. We have seen this before. The Democrats will say that Republican women can't speak for women because we don't agree point by point with their leftist agenda. These are worn-out tactics, my friends.

However, despite the minority's decision to walk away and put politics ahead of survivors, I am leading our effort to continue getting a bill done that focuses on providing the resources and support survivors across the country need for women and children in urban and rural areas like mine.

My goal has always been to empower survivors, to punish abusers, and to enhance the overall purpose behind this very important law. That is why, this week, I plan to put forward a bill that puts survivors first. We have included a number of issues Senate Democrats failed to address. For example—and this should be so simple, folks—we are holistically addressing female genital mutilation. We have tripled the amount of funding that is available for education and sexual assault prevention. We also focus more on enhancing the penalties for abusers.

As a matter of fact, one of the most objectionable and unacceptable items in the Senate Democratic bill is that they allow accused abusers to go outside of the justice system and negotiate directly with their victim—with their victim—those women, those abused survivors who have already been manipulated and beat down. It allows those abusers to negotiate directly with their victims to avoid jail time; that is, of course, as long as the victim consents, as if an abusive relationship ever involved consent—outside of the justice system, folks, outside of the justice system. It is unimaginable that we would allow or fund such an abusive system or abusive situation and allow abusers to escape justice. I think abusers should face justice, and I am not sure why our Senate Democratic colleagues don't agree.

Coming from a rural area of our country, I made sure we prioritized rural resources in our bill. We are offering increased funding for housing assistance so that women and children can be safe from their abusers. When living in an area like mine—rural Montgomery County, Red Oak, IA—the nearest shelter is an hour away. You

have virtually cut off a woman and her children from any job she might have, any family she might have, and it truly takes them out of their life. By offering these housing resources through voucher programs, our bill enables them to rent an apartment or home in their home community.

Imagine what we could do in this body if we worked with a single purpose instead of a dozen different motives. Imagine this entire body pulling together with a single purpose, focusing on assisting those survivors.

I welcome the support of all of my colleagues for my bill—Democrats and Republicans—and I hope we can all join together in this effort. How many more violent abusers can we put behind bars to keep survivors safe? How many more people would be alive today?

I want to thank my colleagues for joining me today to speak on the importance of the Violence Against Women Act. I want to send the message to the countless survivors across this country: We are with you. We hear you, and we are working for you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would like to begin by thanking our friend and colleague from Iowa, Senator ERNST, for her leadership on the reauthorization and—indeed, I think the important point should be made—to strengthen the Violence Against Women Act. We don't have to settle for the House bill. We can have a better bill for victims of domestic violence. Unfortunately, like so much important work, we seem constantly to get diverted and distracted and dragged down by the partisanship that seems to dominate Washington, DC, these days. For many months, our colleague from Iowa has been working closely with Senator FEINSTEIN from California to try to figure a way to reauthorize this critical law.

In the meantime, though, not on one occasion but on two occasions, we have offered a continuing resolution that would extend the current reauthorization and our Democratic colleagues have shut that down. So we are in uncharted territory where we don't currently have an authorization for the Violence Against Women Act.

I shared our colleague's disappointment when our Democratic colleagues walked away from the negotiating table and chose to introduce a replica of the House's partisan bill, which as you have heard, does not have the support to pass in the Senate. Let me say one thing that should be abundantly clear but sometimes I think it gets lost: We all agree that more must be done to prevent violence and respond to it. It is fair to say that we have different opinions on what those pathways look like, but one thing that should not be up for debate is whether or not we reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. That is something we need to do.

The fact is that we don't have to settle for the House bill. We can do better. Our Democratic colleagues took an interesting approach in introducing a bill that a majority of people in this Chamber will not support, and they know that. Sadly, that is part of the point. They know they have a bill that does not enjoy consensus support because they would rather make the political point and argument that somehow some of us on this side don't believe in supporting victims of domestic violence, which is absolutely a falsehood. It is a lie. During a press conference, the Senator from Hawaii even conceded five times that the House bill is going nowhere, but that is the path our Democratic colleagues have chosen. Rather than working in a bipartisan fashion to build a consensus package that could actually become law, they decided to head down a partisan path led by the House bill, which came to us 7 months ago.

Clearly, some of our colleagues here in the Senate are not interested in actually making laws. They are in it for the headlines, for the politics. In the face of this ridiculous and unacceptable jockeying, I am glad that today Senator ERNST will introduce a consensus alternative to the bill offered by our colleagues, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of the legislation. This bill introduced by the Senator from Iowa will send more funding and more resources to the Violence Against Women Act than the Democrats' bill. It is actually better and will authorize a program for twice as long. It will give the Department of Justice the stability it needs to plan for the future without being jerked around by partisan gains.

This bill includes a lot more than just funding. It also addresses a number of horrific crimes that are being committed against women and girls in our country. Sex trafficking, for example, is currently not always recognized as a form of sexual assault—and it is—but this bill would make that clear. It would also enhance the maximum criminal penalties for sexual abuse of minors and other vulnerable groups. It will, as you heard, take aim at heinous crimes like mutilation and address crimes in rural areas and on Tribal lands. This legislation includes provisions from a number of bipartisan bills that have been introduced in the Senate to both improve resources for victims and target specific types of abuse.

One example is a bill I introduced with the Senator from California, my friend Senator FEINSTEIN, called the HEALS Act, which will remove some of the hurdles that exist between victims of domestic violence and their access to safe housing. That is in our bill. This provision would also include greater flexibility for transitional housing programs so that survivors can get back on their feet without the fear of losing the roof over their head.

This bill includes language introduced by Senators MURKOWSKI and CORTEZ MASTO to combat the epidemic of

murdered and missing Native women and girls. It will allow for better law enforcement coordination and provide local and Tribal law enforcement with more resources to address these crimes. It is critical that we all call attention to these despicable acts of violence and unequivocally reject them without regard to partisanship or party.

Another challenge we face is technology outpacing our ability to counter certain types of exploitation. Abusive images and videos proliferate online, for example. This is a relatively new challenge, but it is real and it is omnipresent. This legislation will empower victims of this type of abuse to remove the content from the internet by using copyright takedown authority. It also establishes an innovation fund for the Office on Violence Against Women to address emerging trends so victims can get the support they need as quickly as possible.

If you compare this legislation to the bill passing the House and introduced by our Democratic colleagues here, there is no question that our version does more to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. It provides more funding over a longer period of time, and it targets despicable crimes that are being committed across the country that aren't even covered by the House bill.

Let me just close by thanking our friend from Iowa for continuing to fight for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and for leading the effort to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. It is a bill that never should have lapsed, despite two attempts to continue it that our Democratic colleagues objected to. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill and look forward to working with all of our colleagues to advance it. I hope our colleagues will return to the negotiation table and work with us so we can send a long-term reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act to the President's desk for his signature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues from Iowa, Texas, and Alaska in calling for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA. VAWA was foundational to addressing domestic violence and sexual assault and supporting survivors in their recovery.

VAWA expired earlier this year, and it is critical that the services and tools offered through the law are reauthorized so we can continue to help and empower survivors. Additionally, it is important that we make it known that crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking are not tolerated.

Senator ERNST will be introducing this legislation, which I am cosponsoring, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. This bill includes key Tribal provisions, such as expanding Tribal criminal jurisdiction and upholding Tribal sovereignty while

amending the 2013 VAWA, and providing increased funding for Indian Tribes to address violence committed against Indians on their lands.

A Department of Justice report found that more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women experience violence in their lifetime, and Native women are significantly more likely to experience cases of stalking and physical violence by an intimate partner.

Under Senator ERNST's VAWA bill, Indian Tribes will be allowed to train more lawyers and Tribal court judges, further strengthening the Tribal criminal justice system; have access to increased data and reporting on the subject of missing and murdered Indians; and will require the Department of Justice to issue annual reports to Congress in order to thoroughly track the progress of the special criminal jurisdiction and better determine trends of violence committed on Indian lands.

The Committee on Indian Affairs has held hearings on violence against Indians and missing and murdered Native Americans. As chairman of the committee, I introduced legislation that would increase resources to Indian victims of crime. The Senate majority VAWA includes my SURVIVE Act, which would provide Indian Tribes with a 5-percent Tribal set aside of the Crime Victims Fund. Prior to our work on this initiative, Tribes were accessing less than 1 percent of this important funding. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I have included a Tribal set-aside in the three previous fiscal years of criminal justice science packages, which underscores the importance of passing authorizing language, such as my SURVIVE Act.

This VAWA bill also includes Savanna's Act, a bill I am cosponsoring, named for Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a pregnant woman from the Spirit Lake Nation in my home State who went missing and was found murdered 8 days later. Savanna's tragic death did not go unnoticed and has helped to raise awareness about missing and murdered Native American women. Savanna's Act will help to address cases of missing or murdered Indians by directing the Attorney General to review, revise, and develop law enforcement and criminal justice guidelines; improving access to Federal criminal databases; holding Tribal consultations with Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations when the Department of Justice develops and implements guidelines; requiring training and technical assistance to Indian Tribes participating in the guidelines implementation process; and mandating data collection and reporting by the Department of Justice.

The Senate majority VAWA includes these important Tribal bills, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of Senator ERNST's bill. There are many great provisions in this VAWA bill, and I hope my colleagues on the other side of the

aisle will give it serious consideration. We must act to reauthorize VAWA in order to help support survivors and provide them with the assistance they need to recover. Reauthorizing VAWA also sends the important message that crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking are not tolerated in this country, and that we will continue to support survivors.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues here on the importance of the VAWA reauthorization. In particular, I want to thank Senator ERNST for her months of hard work that she has put into this bill that we are introducing today. I am a proud cosponsor on that bill.

You saw in her remarks earlier her passion, her energy, and her focus on rural America, which is very important to me and my great State of Alaska. I am hopeful, as all of my colleagues here are, including our friend from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, that we in the Senate are going to get to a place where we can have a bipartisan bill that is going to reauthorize VAWA. This is hugely important for America, and it is hugely important for Alaska.

I come down to the floor every week and I talk about someone who is doing something great in my State. I like to brag about the great State of Alaska. It is an amazing place, but, I will tell you, there is one area where we are not so amazing. My State, unfortunately, has the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault of any State in America. It is horrendous. The number of victims and the carnage that this leaves in Alaska and throughout our country are something we should be able to come together and fix. We can do this.

I want to talk about a provision in Senator ERNST's bill that is something that I have been working on with her, but, importantly, with many Senators, including a lot of my Democratic colleagues. It is title XII of the bill. It is called the "Choose Respect" title. This is a series of bills that I have introduced with Senators GILLIBRAND, HARRIS, and COONS, my Democratic colleagues, and it is focused on trying to change the culture and get more legal resources to victims and to survivors.

Why is that so important? When you look at the studies that show what is the best way for a survivor to break out of the cycle of violence that they often find themselves in, one of the answers is to get them an attorney. It empowers them. It enables them to use the justice system to their advantage. Yet here is the problem. When you look—literally, on a daily basis—at the lack of legal representation for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, it is endemic across the country. So a number of the elements of this bill, particularly under the "Choose Respect" title, are going to try to change this.

Last year, we had legislation that I authored that was passed into law and was then signed by the President. It was called the POWER Act and was about getting more legal resources for survivors. It was a good start, but it didn't do enough. The bill this year—again, a bill that I cosponsored earlier with Senator HARRIS of California—focuses on this issue.

Think about this: If you have an accused abuser—let's say an accused rapist—and if there is an indictment, under the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, that perpetrator gets a right to counsel. OK. That is our Constitution. That is fine. What does the victim get? What does the survivor get? Right now, the victim gets nothing. Far too often, victims go without any legal representation, and that is often the beginning of a cycle they fall into.

One of the provisions of this would be, once there is an indictment of a crime of violence, that the Federal Government would help to ensure the goal of having the victim also get an attorney through State domestic violence counsels. These are just some of the elements of this bill.

Senator GILLIBRAND and I have legislation that is part of this. It is called the Choose Respect Act, which would have a public advocacy program to try to get young men in particular to start changing our culture. It is not just a problem in Alaska; it is a problem throughout the country.

There are many things in this bill that are very bipartisan, and I certainly am committed to working with Senator CORNYN, Senator HOEVEN, Senator BLACKBURN, Senator FEINSTEIN, and Senator ERNST in order to get to the compromises we need to make in the Senate to pass this bill. That is what we want to have done. That is why we are all here on the floor, talking about this passionately. I think we can do it because it is too important to miss this opportunity to pass legislation that is going to help some of the most vulnerable people in our country and in my State, and I am certainly committed to working with everybody here to make it happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to complete my remarks before the vote.

NOMINATION OF ADRIAN ZUCKERMAN

Mr. President, I also ask that in relation to the Zuckerman nomination, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I am so pleased to stand with Senator ERNST and my colleagues today to talk about the 2019 Violence Against Women Act.

Most women will tell you that they know of a female friend or acquaintance or relative who has experienced the horrors of sexual assault or domestic violence or even trafficking. Through my work with shelters back home in Tennessee, I have learned that the volunteers, the counselors, the advocates, and the attorneys who support these victims are of the utmost importance. They are who the victims need to see the minute they walk through that door, into their arms, and hear them say: How can we help you? This is a safe place.

These are the people who come around them to empower them, and the one thing I hear over and over in the wake of one's attack is that these victims need that type of support. This is why, in addition to providing funding for both prevention and educational programs, this year's authorization will do some important things. It will increase funding for the court-appointed special advocates by \$3 million. It will provide over \$1 million per year for Federal victim counselors. It will also help to provide transitional housing to victims, which is something they will desperately need. They need to know they have a safe place.

These resources—and this is important—are going to go directly into the hands of those who are providing these services, and this will have a direct impact on the lives of these women when they need it the most.

Just for a moment, I would like to highlight a portion of the reauthorization on which I have spent a good deal of time working this year. It has to do with a particular violent sexual crime that is so grotesque that most Americans prefer not to even acknowledge it. They don't want to admit that this exists. Yet, for the victims of female genital mutilation, the pain and the humiliation are nearly unbearable.

You would think that Federal prosecutors would be able to make short work out of such heinous charges, but due to a loophole in Federal criminal law, scores of victims have watched their abusers walk free. The Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2019, which is a separate bill that I sponsored earlier this year, is now a part of this year's reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. It will correct fatal constitutional flaws in the Federal statute that bans the practice of FGM. When this is done, under Federal law, prosecutions for mutilation and cutting will be able to continue.

I would be remiss if I did not say that in a perfect world, we would not have to worry about allocating resources for safe houses and for victim counseling. We should not have to do this, but this is not a perfect world. So, yes, indeed, we do have to step up and do this for the sake of the thousands of women who fall victim to sexual violence, trafficking, and sexual abuse each year.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together and

work on this. Let's pass the 2019 Violence Against Women Act.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON ZUCKERMAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Zuckerman nomination?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 362 Ex.]

YEAS—65

Alexander	Graham	Perdue
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Isakson	Rubio
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Cassidy	Jones	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cooms	King	Shaheen
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sinema
Cramer	Manchin	Sullivan
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	McSally	Tillis
Daines	Menendez	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Warner
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Murphy	Young
Gardner	Paul	

NAYS—30

Baldwin	Feinstein	Reed
Bennet	Gillibrand	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Smith
Cantwell	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 503.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Dan R. Brouillette, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, last week, my colleague Senator BLUMENTHAL stood on the floor of this Chamber to talk about the epidemic of gun violence in our country. Gun violence is an issue that hits close to home for my friend from Connecticut.

Seven years ago, his home State was the site of one of the most horrific acts of gun violence anyone can imagine. A young man armed with an assault rifle opened fire in Sandy Hook Elementary School, murdering 20 first graders and 6 adults.

While he spoke on the floor of this Senate, Senator BLUMENTHAL was handed a note informing him that, at that very moment, an active shooter was on the loose at another school—this one in Santa Clarita, CA. This marked the 243rd instance of gun violence at a school in this country since the massacre at Columbine High School in 1999. Sadly, today, school shootings have become almost routine and commonplace. It has gotten to the point that students are fearful but, sadly, not surprised when a shooting occurs at their school.

Following an attack last year at Santa Fe High School in Texas that killed eight students and two teachers, 17-year-old student Paige Curry was asked whether there was a part of her that couldn't believe this happened at her school. Her response was heartbreaking. She said:

There wasn't.

She said:

It's been happening everywhere. I've always felt it would eventually happen here too.

This is the country we now live in: a country where we have more guns than we have people; a country where a mass shooting—that is a shooting involving the death or injury of four or more victims—occurs, on average, more than once every day; a country where school shootings occur frequently enough that students feel it will eventually happen at their own school.

This is not the country any of us should want to live in. Yet the U.S. Senate—one of the few institutions